GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

As described by
FRANK H. HUMPHREYS, R.F.C.
Sometime Asst. Supdt. of Police, Madras

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PREFATORY NOTE

Frank H. Humphreys is a name quite familiar to the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Bhagavan's biography, *Self-Realization* by B. V. Narasimha Swami, has two chapters on Humphreys, giving a brief sketch of his life and Sri Bhagavan's instructions to him.

When Humphreys visited Sri Ramana Maharshi in 1911, he conveyed to Felicia Scatcherd, who was then editing the International Psychic Gazette, London, his impressions of Sri Maharshi and His instructions. These were compiled into a booklet in 1925 and the chapters in *Self-Realization* are only extracts from this.

Humphreys' narration of his experiences with Sri Bhagavan is so simple and arresting that the readers find in it an excellent presentation of Bhagavan's teachings.

S. Narasimhayya who wrote the introduction that follows was a Telugu Munshi in Vellore. He was a disciple of Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni and Sri Bhagavan. It is he and Kavyakanta that brought Humphreys to Sri Bhagavan.

A brief reference to Humphreys' visit to Sri Bhagavan and the teachings, in Mr. Osborne's *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge* concludes thus:

"Police service did not prove congenial to Humphreys. Sri Bhagavan advised him to attend to his service and meditation at the same time. For some years he did so and then he retired. Being already a Catholic and having understood the essential unanimity of all religions, he saw no need to change, but returned to England, where he entered a monastery."

PUBLISHER

MAJOR CHADWICK ON HUMPHREYS

"He was the first European to visit Bhagavan as far as is known or at least the first to record his visit. He has given a beautiful picture of him in the Virupaksha Cave. The teachings are definite and are a guide to all who came after. Of whom else is it recorded that Bhagavan said: 'I am giving these instructions as a Guru gives them to a disciple?' Certainly there was some special tie between these two."

— *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi*

INTRODUCTION

I do not like to stand between the earnest reader and this interesting piece of religious literature. But weak as I am, I shall do what little I can, being asked to do it. This is an impressive and instructive description by a young man (eager in search of *Mahatmas* for enlightenment) of his visit to, and experiences with Mahatma Sri Ramana Maharshi, a living Saint of South India who is known and revered as having attained the goal of the *Vedantic* religion, and who is the fountainhead of the soul-force to humanity in these days of rampant materialism. The description is concise and vivid and needs, in my opinion, no preface or introduction. In the Master's presence, what a great vibration there is in the body, and how elevated the mind and invigo-rated the spirit are, a man can only feel but cannot express. The Master's teaching is just what is needed in these times, when men are short in life, weak in body, and feeble in spirit, their entire attention being drawn to things material — apparent and temporal — in preference to what is spiritual — real and eternal. The whole teaching of Mahatma Sri Ramana Maharshi turns on the only pivot: "Knowest thou thyself, thou wilt know everything and wilt have no more to know." He advocates a very simple process of enquiry, viz. "Who am I?" A pure and constant thought of *Atman* — devoid of form, name and attribute — takes the thinker to the source of all thoughts — the heart, where the enquirer and the enquired are merged, or in a way lost in the enquiry, which is *Mukti*, liberation or Self-realization. This realization is the real worship of *Atman* — God within and without.

The author of this attractive booklet seems to have gathered information about Sri Ramana Maharshi from various sources and at different times. A word or two as to

how it was that Mr Frank H. Humphreys chanced to hear of our Maharshi and visit him and be brought into the roll of his admirers, may interest the reader.

F. H. Humphreys came to India as Assistant Superintendent of Police in January 1911. When he reached Bombay he was so bad in health that he had to be taken to the Bombay hospital where he remained up to the middle of March. He arrived at Vellore on the 18th of that month. When I went to him that day to begin Telugu alphabets, the first question he put me was: “Munshi! Do you know astrology?” I said I did not. The next question was: “Can you get me an English translation of some book on astrology?” I complied with his request by getting him a copy from the George Union Club, Vellore. On the morning of the next day, the 19th, while returning the book to me, he asked me: “Do you know any *Mahatmas* here?” I feigned not to know any sage and denied the knowledge of any such great men. On the morning of the third day, the 20th, he came upon me with a searching and vehement question: “Munshi! You said yesterday you did not know any *Mahatma*. I saw your Guru this morning in my sleep. He sat by my side. He told me something which I did not understand nor did he, what I said to him. The first man in Vellore whom I met in Bombay was you.” When I questioned him how it was that he saw me in Bombay, though I had never travelled beyond Guntakal, he said that when he was lying with high fever in the hospital at Bombay, he, in order to be free from pain for a while, diverted and directed his mind (attention) to Vellore and, in his astral body, the first man he met there was I. I left him saying I knew not anything about the astral body or any body for that matter save the physical one. Curiosity however tempted me to test him, and in the afternoon, I took to him a bundle of photographs of great men including those of our Maharshi and Ganapathi Muni. I silently placed the bundle

before him on his table and quietly went to Mr L. Clift, another police gentleman whom I was then teaching. When I returned to the writer of this booklet an hour later, he invited me with the words: “There is the likeness of your Guru. Is he not your preceptor? Tell me.” Thus saying, he pointed to me the photograph of our Ganapathi Sastriar, separated from others. This act of his surprised me. I was caught and I could not hide me or my master. I had regarded (and I do still regard) Ganapathi Sastriar as my Guru. In 1906 he taught me how to concentrate and directed me to divert and fix my attention on *Paramatma*, known as Sri Ramana, a name dear to my heart. Sastriar’s instruction is not different from that of our Maharshi. Mr Humphreys again became ill and was advised by a doctor to go to Ootacamund which he did on 1st April 1911. While there, he wrote to me about his meeting a strange person, poorly clad but well-built, with bright eyes, matted hair and a long beard. The gentleman with whom Mr Humphreys was staying on the hills said to him that he had never seen that strange man, though he had been living there for several years. Mr Humphreys asked me who that man could be. I simply answered that, judging by the description he gave me, I thought he ought to be a *siddha*.

His second letter from that hill-station was a request to teach him *hatapranayama*. Considering the weak state of his health, I did not think it right to speak to him about the voluntary and forced restraint of breath but simply told him that constant and pure thought of *Paramatma* in our heart would bring about the natural *kumbhakam*, absorption of mind in the heart — the ultimate stage and state which sages long for.

His third question from the Nilgiris was: “Will flesh-eating be a help or hindrance to the progress of meditation?” In answer to this, I wrote to him some five or six pages on

"*Ahimsa paramo dharma*" explaining that harmlessness or non-killing is the greatest of the virtues and concluded the letter with words: "Flesh-eating does not help the meditator in meditation." He replied that what he saw in a dream that morning was confirmed by what was written in my letter received a few hours later, that it would be hard for him to give up at once his long accustomed habit of flesh-eating and that he would slowly do it. In one of his letters from England during later years I remember he wrote to me that he had become a vegetarian.

His fourth letter from that cool and salubrious health resort sought my advice as to whether he could join a mystic society, as he was then about to complete 21 years of age. He added that the members of that society had the privilege of meeting and talking with *Mahatmas* face to face and that, in one of his former births he had been connected with that society. As I am neither a believer nor a non-believer in mysticism and as what I wanted was a simple *shanthi* — peace of mind and oneness with the *Atman* within — and as it was my conviction that pure, simple and ceaseless thought of Brahman, with no form, no name and no attribute would secure me this sublime state — a blessing — I only wrote to him that things would be done according to one's own *prarabdha* and if it was his *karma* that he should become again a member of that mystic society nothing could prevent him and for that reason I could give him no advice.

About the end of 1911, he returned from the hills. One day, when I was teaching him Telugu in Vellore, he asked me for paper and pencil and drew a picture of a mountain cave with some sage standing at its entrance and a stream gently flowing down the hill in front of the cave. He said he saw this in his sleep and asked me what it would be.

Immediately the thought of our Maharshi, then dwelling in the Virupaksha cave came to my mind and I told him about Sri Ramana Paramatma. From the day he saw Ganapathi Sastrigal in his dream, he had been asking and urging me to take him to the Sastriar. How he happened to meet Ganapathi Sastriar and how he was taken to the Maharshi, he has himself clearly explained in his book. Subsequently he took several independent trips to our Master whenever there was a doubt to be cleared or a question to be asked.

Now I shall relate what transpired in the presence of the Maharshi during his first visit to him. He saluted the Mahatma and remained in silent prayer and meditation for a few minutes. When permitted to talk, the first question he asked was, "Master, will I be helpful to the world?" The Mahatma's answer was, "Help yourself, you will help the world." The same question repeated had the same reply with observation that he was in the world but not different (separate) from it, nor was it different from him, and that therefore by helping himself, he would help the world — (meaning thereby the one-ness of *jiva* with *Atman*).

The next and the last question was: "Master, can I perform miracles as Sri Krishna and Jesus did?" This question was met by a counter question: "Were they, at the time when they performed miracles, aware that they were performing miracles?" Mr. Humphreys, after a minute's silence, replied: "No, Master. They were only the media through which God's power did its work." How much importance can be attached to things mystic in nature is vividly explained in this book.

Dear Brethren! When a man is lost in God, he becomes a mere tool in the hand of God, and is one with God, having become a part and parcel of God; he gets that peace and

happiness (unaffected by joys and sorrows) which can only be enjoyed but never described. May we aim at this state of mind's rest and peace in heart which the holy ones are ever after!

Madanapalle,
2-3-1925. S. NARASIMHAYYA

I

MORE AUTHENTIC MAHATMAS

BY FELICIA R. SCATCHERD
("FELIX RUDOLPH")

1

"Mr. Thurstan's articles are often talked of. We could do with more about India and visits to the Masters." So wrote a friend with reference to the *International Psychic Gazette*.

The same day brought me a packet of letters from a young friend in India. I had not seen him since he was in his teens. I shall call him Mr. Frank. It is his Christian name, and suits him admirably, so I shall not change it. I shall transcribe his experiences as far as possible in his own words.

2

FRANK MEETS HIS FIRST MASTER

About three months ago, I met in my sleep a great man. I spoke about it to the Telugu Munshi here. The Munshi brought me some pictures. I picked out the man at once from the others. Last Friday, this man was coming through Vellore to go to a Theosophical Conference, at Tiruvannamalai. He does not belong to the Theosophical Society. All Masters work for the common good.

When the train came in, I recognised him at once. He is about five feet ten inches in height and well built, with a high round forehead, and aquiline nose — good-looking in every sense of the term. He got out of the train and we sat together in the waiting-room.

It is impossible to describe what it is like to be in the presence of a Master. I did not know he was a Master, but to sit in his presence, though he hardly said a word, and does not know English, was to feel oneself thrilling through and through — to feel new impressions touching one mentally. It was an extraordinary experience.

I learned later that he was the first Sanskrit scholar in India, and that is saying something out here where Sanskrit is the language of the Scriptures and every student of wisdom learns it. He knows the sciences inside out, and many languages. You remember how the Apostles suddenly "spoke with tongues." Well, there are people here, who have known this man all his life, and they know that up till one day, he did not speak a word of Tamil, a very difficult language. Fifteen days afterwards, he was able to give a long lecture in pure Tamil and to read it and write it as well as any of the professors.

I asked him how he achieved this feat and he replied, "By meditation."

Think of that! No book! No grammar! Simply meditating on God, as these men know how to, and asking to be taught Tamil. His face, when at rest shines with happiness. At the least excuse he laughs, and often turns to you and shakes his head in a way Indians have, which means: That's all right! Cheerio!

He promised to spend the afternoon and evening of today in teaching me, and he will then go into seclusion for over a

year. He said if I would come to Tiruvannamalai he would take me up to see the Maharshi (a *Mahatma* or very Great Master) who lives there, and who is supposed to be one of the greatest *Mahatmas* in India.

3

FRANK VISITS THE MAHARSHI

Yesterday I got a day's leave and went on with the Munshi to meet Sastriar (the Master of whom I have been writing). Sastriar and the Munshi are both *chelas* (disciples) of the Maharshi. We heard Sastriar lecture for an hour and a half in Tamil to a huge crowd, and he appeared refreshed by his efforts. At 2 p.m., he pointed to the cave where the Maharshi lives, and we set off up the mountain to see Him. When we reached the cave we sat before Him at His feet and said nothing. We sat thus a long while, and I felt lifted out of myself.

Then Sastriar told me to look the Maharshi in the eyes, and not to turn my gaze. For half an hour I looked Him in the eyes which never changed their expression of deep contemplation. I began to realize somewhat that the body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost — I could only feel His body was not the man, it was the instrument of God, merely a sitting motionless corpse from which God was radiating terrifically. My own sensations were indescribable.

Sastriar then said I might speak. I asked for enlightenment — teaching and He spoke and we listened. In a few sentences of broken English, and in Telugu, He conveyed worlds of meaning and taught me direct, which He seldom does, and made me His *chela* — not of course such a one as the Sastriar, His own very special *chela* but as one of the many that great Masters have.

The most touching sight was the number of tiny children, up to about seven years of age, who climb the mountain, all on their own, to come and sit near the Maharshi, even though He may not speak a word or hardly look at them for days together. They do not play, but just sit quietly there in perfect contentment.

He is a man beyond description in His expression of dignity, gentleness, self-control, and calm strength of conviction.

4

FRANK'S SECOND VISIT TO THE MAHARSHI

I went by motor and climbed up to the cave. He smiled when He saw me but was not the least surprised. Before He had sat down, He had asked me a question private to myself, of which He knew, showing that He recognised me. Everyone who comes to Him is open as a book, and a single glance suffices to reveal its contents.

"You have not yet had any food and are hungry."

I admitted that it was so. He immediately called to a *chela* to bring me food — rice, ghee, fruit, etc., eaten with the fingers, as natives do not use spoons. Though I have practised eating this way I lack dexterity. So He gave me a coconut spoon to eat with, smiling and talking between whiles. You can imagine nothing more beautiful than His smile. I had coconut milk to drink, white like cow's milk and delicious, to which He had himself added sugar.

When I had finished I was still hungry, and He knew it and ordered more. He knew everything, and when others pressed me to eat fruit when I had had enough He stopped them at once.

I had to apologise for my way of drinking. He only said, "Never mind". Natives are particular about this. They never sip nor touch the vessel with their lips, but pour the liquid straight in, thus many can drink from the same cup without fear of infection.

Whilst I was eating He was relating my past history to the others, and accurately too. Yet He had seen me but once before, and many hundreds in between. He simply turned on clairvoyance as we would refer to an encyclopaedia. I sat for about three hours listening to His teaching. (He had been shown a book, printed from a manuscript given to me by Mrs R. W. D. Nankivell, to get His opinion about it. He praised it highly, and quoted from it.)

I heard that on one occasion, when a *chela* asked Him a question, He picked up the book, pointed to a passage in it, and said, "There is your answer".

Later on I was thirsty, for it had been a hot ride, but I would not have shown it for worlds. Yet He knew, and told a *chela* to make me some lemonade.

At last I had to go, so bowed as we do, and went outside the cave to put on my boots. He came outside too, and said I might come to see Him again.

5

FEARLESSNESS AND A SENSE OF SECURITY ENGENDERED BY CONTACT WITH THE MASTER

It is strange what a change it makes in one, for the moment, at any rate, to have been in His presence. I am used to dogs, but still would feel disturbed if one set on me in the ordinary course of events. Yet this happened there, and I only looked at the dog and walked straight on, though it tried to bite me

three or four times. I felt no fear, nor was I in any way upset. I heard startled exclamations but only realised that there had been any danger when half way down the mountain.

A dog bite is no joke in this country, not only because of the savageness of dogs and the “germy” state of their teeth, due to the carrion they eat, but also on account of the bad way wounds heal in the heat, and to the prevalence of hydrophobia.

6

FRANK’S VERSION OF THE MAHATMA’S TEACHING

A master is one who has meditated solely on God, has flung his whole personality into the sea of God, and drowned and forgotten it there till he becomes simply the instrument of God, and when his mouth opens it speaks God’s words without effort or forethought, and when he raises a hand God flows again through that to work a miracle.

Do not think too much of psychical phenomena and such things. Their number is legion — utterly indefinite; and once a faith in the psychical things is established in the heart of a seeker, such phenomena have done their work. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, and such things are not worth having when, such far greater illumination and peace are possible without them than with them. The Masters take on these powers as a form of Self-Sacrifice! I know the Masters, two of the greatest, and I tell you that the idea that a Master is simply one who has attained power over the various occult senses by long practice and prayer or anything else is utterly and absolutely false. No Master ever cared a rap for occult powers for he has no need of them for his daily life.

The phenomena we see are curious and surprising — but the most marvellous thing of it all we do not realise and that is that *one*, and only one, illimitable force is responsible for:-

(a) All the phenomena we see,

(b) The act of our seeing them.

Do not fix your attention on all these changing things of life, death, and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing them or perceiving them but only of that which sees all these things. That which is responsible for it all. This will seem nearly impossible at first, but by degrees the result will be felt. It takes years of steady, daily practice, but that is how a Master is made. Give yourself a quarter of an hour a day. Keep your eyes open, and try to keep the mind unshakenly fixed on That Which Sees. It is inside yourself. Do not expect to find that "That" is something *definite* on which the mind can be fixed easily; it will not be so. Though it takes years to find that "That" the results of this concentration will soon show themselves — in four or five months' time — in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round — always unconscious power. I have given you this teaching in the same words as the Masters give it to their intimate *chelas*. From now onwards let your whole thought in meditation be not on the act of seeing nor on what you see, but immovably on That Which Sees.

MORE MAHATMA TEACHING

II

7 - ATTAINMENT

One gets no reward for Attainment. When one understands the idea, one does not want a reward. As Krishna said: "Ye have the right to work, but not the right to the fruit thereof." Perfect attainment is simply worship, and worship is attainment.

If you sit down and realise that you only think by virtue of the One Life, and that the mind, animated by the One Life into the act of thinking is a part of the whole which is GOD, then you argue your mind out of existence as a separate entity, and the result is that mind and body physically (so to speak) disappear and the only thing that remains is Being, which is at once existence and non-existence, and not explainable in words or ideas.

A Master cannot help being perpetually in this state, with only this difference, that in some, to us, incomprehensible way, he can use mind and body and intellect too, without falling back into the delusion of having a separate consciousness.

There is no explaining these things. As Vivekananda said: "You do not help the world at all by wishing or trying to do so, but only by helping *yourself*."

8

RELIGION

It is useless to speculate, useless to try and take mental or intellectual grasp and work from that. That is only religion — a code for children and for social life — a guide to help us to avoid shocks, so that the inside fire may burn up the nonsense in us and teach us, a little sooner, commonsense — i.e. a knowledge of the delusion of separateness.

Religion, whether it be Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Theosophy, Philosophy, or any other kind of "ism" or "sophy" or system can only take us to the one point where all religions meet and no further.

9

GOD

That one point where all religions meet is the realisation in no mystical sense, but in the most worldly and everyday sense — and the more worldly, everyday and practical the better — the fact that GOD IS EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IS GOD.

From this point the work of the practice of this mental comprehension begins, and all it amounts to is the breaking of a habit. One has to cease calling things "things", and to call them God; and instead of thinking them to be things, to know them to be God; instead of imagining "existence" to be the only thing possible, to realise that existence is only the creation of the mind (for if there were not existence the mind could not see anything) and that non-existence is a necessity if you are going to postulate existence. The knowledge of things only shows the existence of an organ to cognize. There are no sounds to the deaf, nothing to see for the blind, and the mind is merely an organ of conception or of appreciation of certain sides of God.

God is infinite, and therefore existence and non-existence are merely component parts. Not that I wish to say God is made up of *definite* component parts. It is hard to be comprehensible when talking of God. ... True knowledge comes from within and not from without. And true knowledge is not "knowing" but "seeing."

10

REALISATION

Realisation is nothing but seeing God literally. You must read all I write literally. Our greatest mistake is that we think of God as acting symbolically and allegorically, instead of practically and literally.

Take a piece of glass, paint colours and forms on it, and put it into a magic lantern, turn on a white light, and the colours and forms painted on the glass are reproduced on the screen. If that light were not turned on, you would not see the colours of the slide on the screen.

How are colours formed? By breaking up white light with a many-sided prism. So is it with a man's character. It is seen when the Light of Life (God) is shining through it, *i.e.*, in a man's actions. If the man is asleep or dead, you do not see his character. Only when the Light of Life is animating the character, and causing it to act in a thousand different ways, in response to its contact with this many-sided world, can you perceive a man's character. If white light had not been broken up and put into forms and shapes on our magic lantern slide, we should never have known there was a piece of glass in front of the light, for the light would have shown clearly through. In a sense that white light was marred, and had some of its clearness taken from it by having to shine through the colours on the glass.

So is it with an ordinary man. His mind is like the screen. On it shines the light, dulled and changed because he has allowed the many-sided world to stand in the way of the Light (God) and break it up. He sees only the effects of the Light (God) instead of the Light (God) Himself, and his mind reflects the effects he sees just as the screen reflects the colours on the

glass. Take away the prism and the colours vanish, absorbed back into the white light from whence they came. Take away the colours from the slide and the light shines clearly through. Take away from our sight the world of effects we see, and let us look only into causes, and we shall see the Light (God).

A Master in meditation, though the eyes and ears be open, fixes his attention so firmly on "That Which Sees," that he neither sees nor hears, nor has any physical consciousness at all — nor mental either, but only spiritual.

We must take away the world, which causes our doubts, which clouds our mind, and the light of God will shine clearly through. How is the world taken away? When, for example, instead of seeing a man you say, "This is God animating a body," which body answers, more or less perfectly, to the direction of God, as a ship answers more or less perfectly to her helm.

11

SINS

What are sins? Why, for example, does a man drink too much? Because he hates the idea of being bound — bound by the incapacity to drink as much as he wishes. He is striving after liberty in every sin he commits. This striving after liberty is the first instinctive action of God in a man's mind. For God knows that he is not bound. Drinking too much does not give a man liberty but then the man does not know that he is really seeking liberty. When he realises that, he sets about seeking the best way to obtain liberty.

But the man only gains that liberty when he realises that he was never bound. The I, I, I's who feel so bound are really the Illimitable Spirit. I am bound because I know of nothing

that I do not sense by one of the senses. Whereas I am all the time that which senses in everybody, in every mind. These bodies and minds are only the tools of the "I", the Illimitable Spirit. What do I want with tools who am the tools themselves, as the colours are the White Light?

Jesus, the man, was utterly unconscious when He worked His miracles, and spoke His wonderful words. It was the White Light, the Life, Who is the cause and the effect, acting in perfect concert. "My Father and I are One." Give up the idea of "I" and "Mine." Can the body possess anything? Can the mind possess anything? Lifeless tools are both, unless the Light of God be shining through. These things which we see and sense are only the split up colours of the One Illimitable Spirit.

12

WORSHIP

How can you best worship GOD? Why, by not trying to worship Him but by giving up your whole *self* to Him, and showing that every thought, every action, is only a working of that One Life (GOD) — more or less perfect according as it is unconscious or conscious.

God works perfectly in our *unconscious* virtuous actions. A Master when instructing is far from any thought of instructing; but to feel a doubt or a difficulty in his presence is to call forth, at once, before you can express the doubt, the wonderful words which will clear away that doubt. The words never fail and the Master with his heart fixed on GOD, realising perfectly that no action is a personal one, making no claims to have either originated the thought or to have been the means of destroying a doubt, saying never "I" or "Mine", seeing only GOD in every thought and action,

whether they be yours or his, feels no surprise, no especial pleasure to himself in having allayed your doubt. He never desires to feel pleasure. He says:

Who is it that feels pleasure? Why, God.

What is pleasure? Why the appreciation — instinctive or otherwise — of God.

Who is the so-called “I”? I is GOD.

God is pleasure. If I desire perpetual pleasure, I must forget myself, and be that which is pleasure itself, viz., GOD.

A Master sacrifices his whole self, lets it down as an artificial idea into the Ocean of GOD Who Is, and Who is, literally, the Material and the Cause of everything, and becomes the embodiment of happiness. Similarly he flings every personal desire aside, even the desire for virtue. He denies it being his own action and attributes it to GOD, till he becomes the embodiment of that personal virtue he once desired, and no one can come near him without being blessed. He is the embodiment of all virtues. Such is true worship and its results.

III

THE MAHARSHI

The facts to be gleaned about him are sparse and meagre, but full of interest by reason of their rare simplicity.

I have been fortunate enough to obtain two photographs of the Maharshi, sitting in different postures, in deep meditation. One of these accompanies my brief jottings. It is no use writing to me for further details. I am publishing all I am permitted to make known.

1

HOW THE CALL CAME

A *chela* whom I know told me this story:

When the Maharshi was sixteen years old he had the true Awakening. But he continued to live with his parents until the crisis which came on August 29, 1896. That day, seeing Maharshi sitting crosslegged and abandoning himself to meditation, his elder brother rebuked him, hinting that one who wished to live like a *sadhu* had no right to a home life. Maharshi left home leaving a note. He started off in obedience to The Call which was from Arunachala. He lived in the Arunachaleswara Temple and other places before he chose to live in the cave where Frank saw him. He is about thirtynine years old, and has lived in the cave now for many years.

2

HOW HE SPENT TIME IN THE CAVE

After the first two years he lapsed into silence. For years he never spoke a word. There was no fanaticism in this except a disinclination to be engaged in conversation. He has been speaking and teaching for the last six years.

He speaks the languages of Southern India, and English. He knows the most important part of the Hindu Scriptures by heart, and is well acquainted with Christian History and Bible Times.

Not many know his name or anything more about him than the story of leaving his home which he has himself told to his *chelas*, and that he is a *brahmin* by birth. His personality is the striking thing about him, and strange stories are told by credible witnesses. For example:

3

A HINDU VERSION OF GIDEON AND HIS FLEECE

One year during the early days of the Monsoon, the Maharshi was sitting at the foot of the mountain in the open air, in deep meditation. A certain woman, known to the narrator had gone to take him an offering and to ask for his blessing. On the way, she was caught in a heavy cloudburst and sheltered under a rock or tree, about three hundred yards from where he was seated. She saw him sitting rapt in meditation all the time.

When the rain was over, she went up to him and found that all around him, for the space of about fifty yards, the ground was completely dry.

4

THE MAHATMA WHO CAUSED THE MAHARSHI TO BREAK HIS TWELVE YEARS' SILENCE

No understanding of the Maharshi is possible without knowing the details of his relationship with Ganapathi Sastriar (see *International Psychic Gazette* for June). One day, Sastriar came to him and spoke in Sanskrit verse, and the twelve years' silence was broken. That is six years ago, and the Maharshi has been speaking and teaching ever since. Sastriar, so to speak, embodies the intellectual aspect of Mastership, and the Maharshi the devotional. Nevertheless, Sastriar is highly devotional, and the keenness of the Maharshi's intellect is indisputable.

What Sastriar himself always says is: "It is not I but the Maharshi who does these things." He evidently regards himself as the Maharshi's instrument, as the wielder of the power generated by this *greatest of living Mahatmas*. But this must not be taken too literally. It is merely a deduction from the facts regarded as a whole. It is noteworthy how immediately the devotional man recognised the intellectually-developed man, and how the latter instantly yielded to the sway of the meditative saintly devotee.

When Sastriar was approaching the foot of the mountain with Frank, on the occasion of Frank's first visit to the Maharshi, he made two prophecies, one of which has been fulfilled and the other awaits the time of fulfilment.

As they came close up to the mountain, Sastriar said, "Hush! we musts be quiet now. We are drawing near to Him."

Sastriar has a subtle sense of humour. Once Frank asked a question about a past incarnation. Sastriar looked at him and said, “Wait for two months and I will tell you all your past incarnations with full details”. For a moment Frank was very pleased; then he realized the Mahatma was testing him. And Sastriar laughed gently in his inimitable way and murmured, “What good? What good would it be?”

5

SASTRIAR’S LEARNING

Once Sastriar felt spiritually called to go and teach Sanskrit in a small town. He went. There was a vacancy in the school and he applied for it. Said the authorities, “How do we know that your Sanskrit is good Sanskrit?”

Immediately Sastriar went up North to Benares, passed the severest tests, took the highest degrees, returned with his certificates to the little town, showed them to the people, and then tore them to shreds and threw them away. A well-known Sanskrit scholar says you can give Sastriar any subject, at random, and he will just walk up and down a few minutes, and then reel off Sanskrit verses, perfect in form and sense faster than you can write them down, dealing with the chosen theme.

6 — SASTRIAR’S CLAIRVOYANCE AND PSYCHIC GIFTS

A man was sent to find out if Sastriar was a seditionary. He found him in a cave, sitting in meditation. The man was in disguise, and said he revered Sastriar and wished to become his *chela*. Sastriar received the visitor with kindness and put

him a few questions. The man had been primed and answered readily. Thus they sat for some little while and Sastriar fell again into meditation.

The man had come straight on his mission, so there was no means by which Sastriar could have received news of his coming. He had put Sastriar no questions and had merely posed as a prospective *chela*.

Then Sastriar said, "You come from such and such a town; you want to find out if I am a seditionary. Why did you tell me untruths?" The man owned up, and eventually became Sastriar's *chela*.

Sastriar has twelve special *chelas*. To each he has entrusted the subject he is best fitted to expound. On one occasion he enumerated the subjects to a *chela*, asking him to choose. This the *chela* did. On looking up, he detected a quiet smile on the Master's face, which told him that he knew beforehand which it would be.

Another time Sastriar said, "England, France, Germany, Italy, America — I go everywhere." Such things are said simply, without a suspicion of boasting, as mere statements of fact.

Sastriar was asked: Could a man remain in perpetual meditation? Could he keep his eyes open so long? Sastriar said "Yes". Then he was watched day and night for a week, during which time he never closed his eyes. If you look at the Maharshi's photo, you will see that the eyes are open. Yet he is sunk in deep meditation and oblivious to all in the outer world. Those who have slept in the cave with the Maharshi, say that practically he never sleeps at all.

7

HOW THE MAHARSHI ANSWERS THE CURIOUS

When people ask questions out of sheer curiosity he will remain a little while in concentration, and will say: “I have not received authority from God to answer this question.” Or he may reply: “You say, I, I want to know. Tell me who is that I? Know first that I, and then you will know everything.”

But in the case of those seeking spiritual light, he is most able and willing to argue any point for the sake of explanation.

With both these men it is invariably the same. Unless already in the train of answering questions, they will never reply straight off but drop first into meditation.

F. R. S.